CLAIMS:

1. A method of recording an input image as digital data, comprising:

determining input bounding boxes corresponding to objects in the input image;

comparing data describing the input bounding boxes to data describing a set of reference bounding boxes;

for an input bounding box sufficiently similar to a reference bounding box, comparing objects in the input bounding box and the reference bounding box; and

if the object in the input bounding box is sufficiently similar to the object in the reference bounding box, coding the object in the input bounding box using a pointer to the object in the reference bounding box.

2. The method of claim 1, the comparing data describing the input bounding boxes step including considering an image type associated with the object in the input bounding box.

3. The method of claim 1, the comparing data describing the input bounding boxes step including considering at least one dimension of the input bounding box.

4. The method of claim 1, the comparing data describing the input bounding boxes step including determining that a number of input bounding boxes sufficiently similar to a reference bounding box is greater than a predetermined threshold.

5. The method of claim 1, the comparing objects step including considering a plurality of blocks within the input image bounding box.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising

scanning a hard-copy image; and

deriving data relating to the input image from the hard-copy image.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising

scanning a hard-copy image; and

deriving data relating to the reference bounding boxes from the hard-copy image.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising

scanning a plurality of hard-copy images; and

deriving data relating to the reference bounding boxes from the hard-copy images.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising

retaining data relating to a plurality of images in a database; and

determining one of the plurality of images to be the reference image.

10. The method of claim 1, the determining step including performing a matching operation between one of the plurality of images and the input image.